

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 208334
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:LPOPE/WNHOWELL:JFC
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P 311929Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 208334

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MASS, SA, LE, US

SUBJECT: SAUDI ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANESE ARMY

REF: JIDDA 5986 (NOTAL)

1. WHEN YOU NEXT HAVE OCCASION TO SEE SAUD, PLEASE MENTION AGAIN THE SUBJECT OF AID TO LEBANON FOR THE REBUILDING OF ITS MILITARY FORCE. SAY THAT, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THIS IS A SUBJECT OF MUTUAL INTEREST, YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO GIVE HIM A STATUS REPORT ON OUR OWN EFFORTS TO ASSIST IN THIS RESPECT, AS FOLLOWS:

2. AS SECRETARY VANCE ANNOUNCED IN BEIRUT ON AUGUST 3, THE U.S. IS MAKING AVAILABLE IN FY 77 DOLS 25 MILLION IN FMS FINANCING TO LEBANON TO HELP REBUILD AND EQUIP THE ARMY. WE HOPE TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL DOLS 75 MILLION, IF
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CONGRESS CONCURS, OVER THE NEXT TWO FISCAL YEARS. ALTHOUGH THE BUILDING PROGRAM IS IN ITS INITIAL STAGES, WE ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO EARLY ACTION BOTH TO IMPROVE LEBANESE MORALE AND CONFIDENCE AND TO HELP PERPETUATE THE MOMENTUM ALREADY UNDER WAY. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING, SINCE THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO LEBANON, WITH COMMANDING GENERAL KHOURY TO DRAW UP A PROGRAM FOR EQUIPPING A CORE MECHANIZED

INFANTRY FORCE OF ABOUT 3300 MEN, WITH LIGHT WEAPONS,

COMMUNICATIONS GEAR, ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT AND OTHER
BASIC ITEMS. WE WILL ALSO BE PROVIDING MILITARY TRAINING
FOR UP TO FIFTY LEBANESE OFFICERS OF THIS NATIONAL ARMY
IN THE U.S. OUR BASIC OBJECTIVE IS TO ASSIST PRESIDENT
SARKIS IN CREATING A MULTI-CONFESSIONAL FORCE LOYAL TO
HIM AND TO LEBANON RATHER THAN ANY COMMUNITY OR FACTION.

3. FYI. IN LIGHT OF HIS REACTION TO YOUR LAST MENTION
OF THIS SUBJECT, WE DO NOT WISH TO PRESS SAUD ON POSSIBLE
SAUDI ASSISTANCE TO LEBANESE MILITARY REBUILDING PROGRAM.
WE HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT SAG MAY COME TO ITS OWN CONCLUSION
THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD BE DESIRABLE. END FYI.

4. FOR BEIRUT: BEIRUT SHOULD NOT RAISE WITH LEBANESE
AUTHORITIES AT THIS TIME THE QUESTION OF SAUDI ASSISTANCE
TO LEBANESE MILITARY FORCE. CHRISTOPHER

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